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THE KENNEDY PAPERS

(Second Article)

LETTERS FROM DICKENS, MACAULAY, COOPER, HOLMES,
LOWELL, AND OTHERS

In the first installment of the Kennedy Papers, published in the last issue of this magazine, we brought together a dozen and a half letters received by the Baltimore novelist from Washington Irving. In the present article we give a number of letters selected from the mass of Kennedy's correspondence with men of note from abroad and with certain of his friends and acquaintances in New York and New England; and to these have been added a few notes from his diary and two of his own letters.

The letters from Dickens grew out of Kennedy's interest in the enactment of an international copyright law, a subject that engaged his attention for several years during his connection with Congress in the forties. There is no letter in the collection, as it happens, from Thackeray, though Kennedy evidently knew him more intimately than he knew Dickens. And there is but a single letter from Cooper, although it is plain that Kennedy's admiration for Cooper was both deep and enduring. Among English writers who are represented in the collection, but whom we must ignore, are Sir Henry Bulwer,¹ Samuel Rogers, and Martin Farquhar Tupper,² and among New Englanders are John Neal, Horace Greeley, Prescott, and Everett.

I

*Dickens to Kennedy*³

NIAGARA FALLS, Thirtieth April, 1842.

MY DEAR SIR,—I am truly vexed to discover, by a mere accident, that a letter I wrote to you from Pittsburgh a month ago, *went to England* in a packet with others! The mistake is so ridiculous that I can hardly offer a serious apology to you for it, although it has annoyed me inexpressibly.

¹ Brother of the novelist and ambassador to the United States in the fifties.

² There are a dozen interesting letters in the Kennedy collection from this eccentric writer.

³ Kennedy makes the following entry in his diary under date of September 30, 1842: "Charles Dickens was in Washington in March—he and his wife. I met him several times, and have received two or three letters from him since he left us."

I told you in that letter (it will come back to you, I dare say, one of these days) that on consideration, and on sitting down to the task, I found I could not write anything which was at all likely to prove of service to you in the matter of your report; that I have always felt, and do always feel, so keenly the outrage which the existing piracy inflicts upon writers—the flagrant injustice which law-makers suffer to be committed upon them as though the exercise of the highest gifts of the Creator of right entailed upon a man heavy pains and penalties, and put him beyond the pale of congressional and senatorial sympathies—that *I cannot*, though I try ever so hard, discuss the question as one of expediency, or reason it as one of national profit and loss. Again and again I put pen to paper agreeably to the promise I made you; and again and again I threw it down in disgust. When Miss Martineau came to me to sign the petition which was presented to the American Legislature a few years ago, I said then that I had an invincible repugnance to ask humbly for what I had as clear a right to as the coat upon my back; and that I could not bring myself to sue to a body which had so long sanctioned such a monstrous and wholesale injustice, as if, in seeking its correction, I asked a favor at their hands. I was persuaded to sign that petition, and did so; I have always regretted it since. And now, if I begin to write upon the subject, the old fit comes upon me, and I get (as Carlyle says of himself in the same matter) “inconveniently loud.” I made a few sketches for your report, clearly showing—as all we authors know perfectly well—that under an International Copyright law, popular books would be no dearer than they are now. Then I bethought myself that I had always said, and always intended to say, that the question was one of plain right and wrong, and was not to be considered, honestly, in any other light. So down went my pen at the thought that if I went on with what I was doing, I could not reiterate that opinion, and say that much for myself, in writing on the subject when I got home. All this I wrote to tell you: and all this is wandering about England at this moment.

I found the documents of which the inclosed are copies, awaiting me at Buffalo a day or two since.⁴ You will see that they are signed by the first writers in England; and that their object (as they have taken fire at my being misrepresented on such a matter) is publicity. Not being very well able, as a stranger, to decide whether it would be best to publish these letters and the memorial, in a literary journal, or in the newspapers, I have sent them to some friends in Boston; begging them to decide, and to do with them what they shall conclude right. I have added a few lines from myself—also for publication—stating that Mr. Carlyle’s creed is mine.

I expect to be in New York on the Thirtieth or Thirty-first of March.⁵ May I hope to hear from you? Faithfully yours always, my dear Sir,

CHARLES DICKENS.

THE HONORABLE ——— KENNEDY.

⁴ The reference is to two letters sent by Carlyle to Dickens, one of them written by Carlyle, the other addressed to Dickens by twelve of his countrymen (including Bulwer, Campbell, and Tennyson). Both documents have to do with copyright conditions in America. There is also in the Kennedy collection an original letter from Carlyle to Dickens, of date March 26, 1842.

⁵ Evidently a mistake for “May.”

CARLTON HOUSE, NEW YORK, Second of June, 1842.

MY DEAR SIR,—I am going on a short excursion up the Hudson, and shall not return until the day of sailing. I have been here but a few hours, and have barely time to acknowledge the receipt of your very welcome and interesting letter.

My address in London is No. 1 Devonshire Terrace, York Gate, Regent's Park. *Command me*, at all times and seasons, in the International copyright matter. And trust me that I will leave no stone unturned which human levers can uproot. Bulwer, Hallam, and all the signers of that letter (with many more behind) will help me cordially. Whatever you have need of, ask for. I will communicate your letter to them all immediately on my arrival in England.

My first step shall be to stop the sale of early proofs to our newspapers in the United States. We will deprive them of that interest in the present robbery, at any rate.

I inclose you Carlyle's autograph communication—and am always

Faithfully yours, CHARLES DICKENS.

THE HONORABLE J. P. KENNEDY.

Macaulay to Kennedy

ALBANY, LONDON, February 23, 1856.

SIR,—My friend, Mr. Thackeray, has sent me a letter written by you to him, and has requested me to furnish you with any information which I may be able to obtain about the fate of a Colonel George Talbot who was sent from Virginia to England as a prisoner on a charge of murder in 1685. I have been almost entirely confined to my room during some weeks, and have not been able to make any researches. I can, however, I think, with confidence say that Colonel Talbot escaped with life. For if a man of his rank had been hanged, there would undoubtedly have been some notice of his end in the Diary of Narcissus Luttrell, who was a very accurate chronicler of executions.

There is a weekly publication here entitled *Notes and Queries*.⁶ Any person who wishes for information on any historical or literary point can send a question to the editor, and may, in this way, learn much that is not to be learned from books. I have sent a question about Colonel Talbot; and it is not impossible that some member of the Talbot family may be able to give an answer. I have the honor to be, Sir, Your most obedient servant,

T. B. MACAULAY.

THE HONORABLE J. P. KENNEDY.

G. P. R. James to Landor

BRITISH CONSULATE, NORFOLK, VIRGINIA, 3 May, 1856.

MY DEAR LANDOR,—Let me make you acquainted with the Honble. J. P. Kennedy, late Secretary of the Navy in the United States. As a Statesman, a literary man, and a connoisseur of the arts, he is equally and deservedly

⁶ Macaulay's inquiry appeared in *Notes and Queries* for March 1, 1856 (p. 173).

well known here, and you have only to converse with him ten minutes to thank me for sharing with you an acquaintance from which the greatest pleasure has been derived during several years by Yours ever,

G. P. R. JAMES.

P. S.—I see I have shocked your Anglo-Saxon prejudices by using a French word. Forgive me.

James to Kennedy

BRITISH CONSULATE, RICHMOND, VA., 20th July, 1857.

MY DEAR MR. KENNEDY,—I have not been very well since I received your letter, and indisposed to even so small and insignificant exertion as that of writing. . . .

Political and courtly men you will, I know, be easily introduced to, by your influences; but I wished to make you known to others, less prominent perhaps, but perhaps more interesting.

Dickens I think you know. Would you like to know Charles Lever? If so, write to Yours ever faithfully, G. P. R. JAMES.

*Lever to Kennedy*¹

MY DEAR SIR,—By a most unlucky contretemps I lost my voice just as I most desired it—to have a talk with you. I have been laid up ever since my arrival here, and am now in that miserable state called convalescence, hesitating between chick[en]-heartedness and chicken broth.

I hope to be a better man, however, in a day or two, and if you will dine with me on Friday at seven o'clock, better still.

Believe me, very sincerely yours,

Tuesday Mg.

CHARLES LEVER.

Excerpt from Kennedy's Diary

(Florence, April 28, 1858.)—Dine with Lever. . . . We have a gay party and a good dinner. After which on returning to the drawing room we have segars, of which Mrs. Lever partakes with apparently high relish. She is suffering from a recent attack which has deprived her of her voice. Lever talks of coming to the U. S. . . . Lever['s] grown-up daughters are very playful and make excellent company. They seem to be highly educated, and speak German and Italian, and I suppose French, with great fluency.

II

After the letters from Irving, the most important series of letters in the Kennedy Papers is that from Edgar Allan Poe.

¹ This letter is without explicit date, but was evidently written either in 1856 or in 1858.

These have all been published by one or another of Poe's biographers, copies of them having been sent to Griswold a few years after the poet's death; but we are able to give a brief passage from Kennedy's diary relating to Poe which has escaped his biographers, and, in addition, extracts from several letters from H. C. Carey, to whom Kennedy had offered in 1833 or 1834 a volume of Poe's tales for publication by Carey and Lea.

Extract from Kennedy's Journal Touching Poe's Early Career

(Baltimore, November 2, 1833.)—In July last I was appointed, together with John Latrobe and Dr. Miller, a committee, by the editors of the *Saturday Morning Visitor* to decide upon a prize tale and poem. Early in October we met for this purpose and having about a hundred tales and poems. The prize for the tale we gave to Edgar A. Poe, having selected that call[ed] "A MS. Found in a Bottle" from a volume of tales furnished by him. The volume exhibits a great deal of talent, and we advised him to publish it. He has accordingly left it in my possession, to show it to Carey in Philadelphia.

Excerpts from Letters of H. C. Carey to Kennedy Relating to Poe

(November 21, 1834.)—I will see to your friend Poe this day or tomorrow. I have not had time since receipt of your letter this morning.⁸

(November 26, 1834.)—I should have written you sooner in relation to your friend, but that I have expected for several days to hear from you. The book shall go to press at once, but I have much doubt of his making anything by it. Such little things [?] rarely succeed, and if they do, their produce is small. I do not expect to make anything, but am perfectly willing to take the chance of it. As he, however, appears to want something immediately, I had thought of handing the volume to Miss Leslie to see if she could select something for her *Souvenir*, for which he could be paid promptly. If he could dispose of them in that way, they would, I think, be more productive than in the form of a volume. Doubting, as I do, any extent of sale that will enable us to make anything by it, I am not very willing to increase the risque by paying the author in advance.

Say what I shall do, and it shall be done. It shall be printed as it stands—or I will hand it to Miss Leslie and print after she shall have selected one—or, in short, what you please shall be done. I should be exceedingly glad to promote your friend's objects if I knew how, but writing is a very poor business unless a man can find the way of taking the public attention,

⁸ It is not clear when Kennedy transmitted to Carey the volume of Poe's tales referred to in this and the foregoing extract. But it appears that Carey's letters were prompted by an inquiry made by Kennedy, at Poe's instance, as to the cause of the delay in publication. See Poe's letter to Kennedy, published by Woodberry, *Life of Poe*, I, pp. 104 f.

and *that is not often done by short stories*. People want something larger and longer. If, by the publication of these tales in the *Souvenir*—or the newspapers—he could obtain anything like a name, his book would afterwards—composed of the same tales—be worth more than it now is, unknown as he is. Direct me.

(May 18, 1835.)—Poe has written me to say that the tale selected by Miss Leslie has been printed already. That being the case, I should be glad [if] he would send her something good in its stead. Will you say so to him, and say that I would have written him but that his letter is only now received and I am excessively occupied.

(October 4, 1835.)—I do not know what to say respecting Poe. Is he not deranged? I should care nothing about aiding him as you propose, but I should like to be sure that he was sane; let me hear from you.

III

Kennedy also counted among his correspondents and friends Poe's earliest editor and biographer, Rufus W. Griswold. Their correspondence began, apparently, in 1845, and continued until Griswold's death, in 1857. It is plain that Kennedy was not offended by Griswold's memoir of Poe, but remained on friendly terms with him to the end. In a letter to Griswold, of date March 9, 1850, Kennedy writes: "In looking over my letters from Edgar Poe I find some of them quite interesting. I will have them copied and sent you." He did not make good this promise, however, until later, as appears from a paragraph in a letter of Griswold's of February 5, 1853:—

"Bohn of London has written to me about a new and complete edition of the Works of Poe. I think I shall prepare one, and am desirous at any rate of enlarging and improving the Memoir of Poe for the New York edition. You were so kind as to say to me once that if I wished, you would furnish me some letters, or copies of letters, addressed by Poe to you, which I could make use of. Pray you, will it be convenient for you to do so this winter at any time?"

From Griswold's letters to Kennedy we have chosen the following as being of most interest; and to those we add one of Kennedy's letters to Griswold:—

Griswold to Kennedy

PHILADELPHIA, Feb. 22, 1845.

DEAR SIR,—As you may have seen stated in the gazettes, I have in preparation a volume to be entitled "The Prose Authors of America" to be published by Carey & Hart of this city, in the style of "The Poets and Poetry of America."

I write to ask permission to give passages from your works,—for such data for a biography as you may be willing to furnish,—and for a portrait, to be engraved by Sartain.

In the forthcoming volume I am anxious to exhibit well the advancement and condition of literature in this country. The number of persons from whom I shall quote is about 50—a small number compared with that of the writers of verses of whose quality I gave specimens—but as large an one as it seems expedient to present as authors in a volume which is likely to have nearly as large a circulation abroad as it will have at home. Of living writers I shall give sketches, and specimens of Cooper, Paulding, Irving, Verplanck, and Hoffman, of New York; Mr. J. C. Neal (probably) of this city; and of Mr. Wilde, Mr. Simms, and yourself, of more southern states. Edwards, Franklin, Legaré, Clay, Webster, Calhoun, Brockden Brown, Channing, Prescott, Emerson, Hawthorne, and other names may occur to you, of men who have done more or less with the pen for the good reputation of the country.

I have in my possession *Horse-Shoe Robinson*, the *Swallow Barn*, *Rob of the Bowl*, *Clement Falconer*, and *Quodlibet*—all of which I believe are acknowledged to be yours. I have also your address delivered before the American Institute in New York. I shall feel greatly obliged to you if you will give me an account—as particular as may be—of your literary life, with a list of your various publications, separate, or in periodicals, which you will permit me to refer to or to select from.

The portraits in the book are to be executed by Sartain, in mezzotint—each on a separate leaf. They will be of Irving, Prescott, Emerson, Wilde, and—with your permission—of yourself.

I have the honor to be Very respectfully, Your obedient servant,
RUFUS W. GRISWOLD.

TO JNO. P. KENNEDY, etc., etc.

NEW YORK, Dec. 9, 1851.

DEAR SIR,—I am instructed by the committee of Mr. Cooper's friends to express their very great anxiety that you accept their invitation to be present at Tripler Hall on the evening of the 24th of this month. Mr. Everett, Mr. Prescott, Mr. Ticknor, Mr. Dana, Mr. Hawthorne, and many other eminent literary men, besides the members of the committee, and Mr. Webster, are expected to participate in the first movement to render fit honors to the memory of an American author. I need not assure you that I myself shall be greatly disappointed and pained if you decline the request of the committee, and of Your very respectful and obedient servant,

RUFUS W. GRISWOLD.

HON. J. P. KENNEDY.

Kennedy to Griswold

BALTIMORE, Monday, Dec. 22, 1851.

MY DEAR SIR,—I had appointed this day for setting out on my visit to New York, to be present at your commemoration of Cooper on the 24th. But here I am at home, quite unable to allow myself this gratification. I am now confined to the house with an inflammation of the eyes produced by the recent cold weather, rendering me not only unfit to take the journey but still more *unpresentable* to any public scrutiny. . . .

You must therefore accept my good will to be with you on that interesting occasion, for the deed; whilst I beg to assure you that my estimate of the genius of Cooper, and his worth to our country as an example and guide in our literature, and of his fame as a national possession, would make any tribute of public respect for his memory, which I could offer, a most grateful duty. My personal regard for him when living, which grew out of many occasions of social intercourse, would lead me, without this highest public motive, to join with his friends in rendering him every appropriate honor. I hope you will look upon me, therefore, as one most unwillingly absent from your celebration, and earnestly sympathizing in the spirit of your meeting and in the proceedings you may adopt.

Very truly, My dear Sir, Yours,

J. P. KENNEDY.

REV. DR. RUFUS W. GRISWOLD, New York.

The sole letter from Cooper preserved among the Kennedy Papers it will suffice to quote only in part :—

Cooper to Kennedy

HALL, COOPERSTOWN, April 22, 1846.

MY DEAR SIR,—Will you pardon my giving you a little trouble? It is of some moment to me to ascertain who and where a Mrs. Oldfield is, who visited this part of the country in 1843. The object of these inquiries is to ascertain through her the circumstances connected with an exchange that she endeavored to effect between the clergyman of our parish, a Mr. Tiffany and a Mr. Berry of Choptank. . . .

As I think it possible these enquiries will cause me to go to Baltimore myself, should your answer let me know that Mrs. Oldfield and Mr. Berry (who is an Englishman, I am told) are to be found there, I will defer thanks and apologies till then.

In the meantime, with my respects to the ladies and Mr. Gray, I remain

Very truly yours J. FENIMORE COOPER.

J. P. KENNEDY, Esquire.

Are you of my way of thinking, in believing that John Bull has no notion of accepting the 49th or anything that does not give him the waters of Puget Sound? Webster's demonstration to the contrary will bring things nearer to a head than all that had been previously said and done. They regard him as a friend.

IV

A long series of letters attests the friendship of Kennedy with N. P. Willis and his family.

Willis to Kennedy

IDLEWILD, Oct.⁹ 4, 1859.

MY DEAR KENNEDY,—I thought of you at the funeral of our beloved Irving on Thursday—so blest in the remembrance of the part I had been privileged to take in that timely visit. How fortunate we were! I was made happy by hearing that he spoke of our visit with great satisfaction but a few days before his death. Thank God that he dropped away so easily and before life became a burthen!

Your charming letter has helped materially in making Idlewild pleasant to the Governor and *gran'ma*—and we all agreed, at table today, to write you a "round Robin," of which this is the beginning.¹⁰ It has been so summery, some of the days since they came, that your not having joined us has been the more regretted. But we will still hope for that happiness next summer.

Nellie is at home with her babies, and all are quite well again, thank God. Your friend "Goldy" is as handsome and lively as ever, and he will be delighted to see you when you come. I will leave room to the others, and begging to be remembered to Mrs. Kennedy, I remain, my dear friend,

Yours most sincerely, N. P. WILLIS.

MY DEAR MR. & MRS. KENNEDY,—We speak of you often, and very much regret you could not join our pleasant circle at Idlewild.

Yours most truly, S. R. GRINNELL.

DEAR MR. KENNEDY,—I have to remember that a willingness to forgive is the best attribute of all good people and (as I wish to be of that number) strive to feel amiably towards you for coming to Idlewild only once, and then when I was away! How could you be so bad? But you left the better part, and therefore there is hope that you will come again in the pleasant weather.

I wish that we might have seen Mrs. Kennedy and yourself during this beautiful Indian summer, to have shared Mother's and Father's visit. You would have seen them; Idlewild; its Master and Mistress to the most advantage. Idlewild and Willis without the children, is seeing a frame but not the picture; and Grandpa and Grandma are never so happy as when with the little ones. I cannot show you "the *twenty*" little people, you used to deem needful to make a family, but five very lovely children.

Just imagine that you have seen Idlewild only in a dream, and the reality you and Mrs. Kennedy will come to see with the bright weather in the spring. Shake hands upon this proposal, with a resolve to make it a fact, and we are friends.

Give my love to Mrs. Kennedy, and remember me cordially to Miss Gray, whom I should be glad to welcome in my home, and with my dutiful affection, as of old, believe me

Very sincerely yours,
CORNELIA GRINNELL WILLIS.

⁹ Evidently an error for November.

¹⁰ The three letters that follow constitute the remainder of this "round Robin."

MY DEAR MR. AND MRS. KENNEDY—Although the last to address you, do not think that I have the less regard for you ; I often bring to mind the happy times we enjoyed together and how much we were indebted to you both for the bright and happy spirit imparted to hours that otherwise would have been dull and unprofitable.

I trust another year will not pass away without [our] meeting you here. I know you would enjoy seeing Nellie and her beautiful children in this delightful home. The youngest, Bailey, 2 years old, is a lovely child ; we have just passed some hours by ourselves ; he is the best of company. In you I mean to include my good friend, Miss Gray, to whom give the regard of your

Sincere and faithful friend, JOS. GRINNELL.

Kennedy to Willis

BALTIMORE, January 10, 1860.

MY DEAR WILLIS,—It is now about a month since I received that very pleasant memorial of the kindness of yourself and your household, partly addressed to Mrs. Kennedy and myself, in a joint letter from Idlewild, bringing a little volume of good wishes from the best friends any man or woman could desire. You will think this a late return for such a bountiful outpouring of that family cornucopia of true and affectionate hearts. But when I tell you that at the moment it reached me and ever since, until within the last week, we have been passing through the twelve labours of settling ourselves in a new home, prominent amongst which was a great book-storm which threw knee-deep upon my library floor, seven thousand volumes, of all shapes from folio boulders down to gravel beds of octodecimos, and that I had to work manfully myself in the task of bringing the scattered families together and restoring order in this little republic of letters, and that, even yet, I can hear the groans of the saints upon the shelves at the indecorous proximity of the sinners—you will be able to imagine how hopelessly I looked for a moment sufficiently tranquil to enable me to thank you and our good friends for the pleasant message of the letter, until my work was done.

That day has now come round, and the first quiet hour of normal life I give to this unwillingly deferred duty.

And first, we all, Mrs. K., her sister, and I, beg to say to Mrs. Willis that my account in personal narrative of Idlewild—its physical beauties, its hospitality, its refined and generous landlord and the custom there, which is manifestly the growth of a nature to make the visitor a wiser and better man through the simple influence of good affections—to all which account of my own experience, we were able to add from our own knowledge the still greater attractions of the spot, when the presiding lady (how beautifully that old Saxon original of the word,—*Lafdig*, the *bread giver*, applies to her!) with those “ five lovely children ” was at home—the picture which our imagination supplied of all these, has kindled the desire of the two ladies of my family, which I hope at the proper season will ripen into a resolve to make the visit which Mrs. W. so kindly suggests, in the bright weather of the spring. Say to her we cordially shake hands with the offer, and shall look to it as the coming gladness of the year. To Mr. and Mrs. Grinnell, who I suppose have left you before this, say, when you have the opportunity, that, with our experiences of the happy times gone by and of the winters and summers we have

had together,—the former being as full of bloom as the latter,—we sincerely join them in the hope that another year will not pass by without our all meeting at Idlewild. Say to the worthy Deacon further, for me, that I am not yet fully convinced that Nantucket is a myth, and that I still persist in my purpose to persevere in my exploration either to strip it of its fabulous pretension, or fix it permanently in the dream land where I have reason to believe he is determined to have it.

And, now my dear Willis, let me say to you in conclusion, that we all here earnestly unite in the prayer that you will bring Mrs. W. with you to make us a visit either here in Baltimore during the winter or in the summer, to the country—better if you will do both—and let us have one of those “good times” which Providence scatters along the pathway of life to be enjoyed by those who choose to look for them and gather them into the household.

We can have another run upon the cow catcher next summer. I will arrange that if you will engage to bring Mrs. W. and Mr. and Mrs. Grinnell to our house, which will be the comfortable point of departure and return from the adventure.

Remember me affectionately to my charming little friend, Imogen—and if you can recall me to Goldy and Topsy, make them conscious of my respect for them, and as a point of interest in their moral welfare my advice that they preserve the most amicable relations with their illustrious compatriot Cæsar.¹¹

The ladies join me in the most cordial regards for Mrs. W. and yourself.

Very truly, your friend, JOHN P. KENNEDY.

P. S.—What did you mean by that reference to *my* cane in your last? I used yours one day, but brought my own home.

N. P. WILLIS, Esquire.

Willis to Kennedy

32 BOND ST., Feb. 14, 1864.

MY DEAR KENNEDY,—It frightens me to look at your firm and dainty hand-writing, and remember while I read it, that my own is in the uncertainties of a *threatened* paralysis. I am to wake up, some morning, pretty soon (the Doctors tell me), like a capsized vessel “to write no more.” My right leg’s volition, I must say, is already somewhat reluctant, and my arm grows numb with any prolonged twisting of my moustache. Take these facts, and the solemn statistic that I am fifty-eight years of age, and then you will give my hand-writing credit for a well preserved firmness.

You ask for Morris’s autograph, but you are too late. He is too palsied to write his own name, even for ourselves, and it has been done by dictation for a whole year. I have none of Poe’s, though you remember that *he* wrote a description of *yours and mine*, on the same page of the “Illustrated News,

¹¹ “Imogen was the daughter by Mr. Willis’s first wife. Goldy was an Irish setter and Topsy a black-and-tan terrier. Cæsar was a Newfoundland dog presented to Mr. Willis by Dr. Kane after his return from the first Arctic expedition.” (Information kindly furnished by Mrs. Grinnell, daughter of Willis.)

Jan. 15, 1853." I will ask Bayard Taylor for his, the next time I propinquize him, and I will forward that and others to you, at Baltimore, in a few days.

I forwarded to Nellie, at Idlewild, your mention of Col. Strother, with whom, of course, we should both be flattered to have any correspondence. She is resident, with all our children at Idlewild, and they are a wonderfully good comment on her excellence as a mother. . . .

You and I are once more associated in the picture of "Irving and his friends," and I am inclined to congratulate you on being the *best* represented man in the whole company, while I am the *worst*! But I am happy to go down even on such terms to posterity, the companion of John P. Kennedy.

Our beloved old friend, Mr. Grinnell, continues well, and my eldest boy went down and passed a vacation with him at New Bedford very recently. He and I always talk over our visit to you, when we get together at home.

In my new editorial partnership, I am rejoicing in a very handsome and accomplished youth, who has bought out my old partner Morris, and between "Willis and Hollister," there is a great deal of beauty—plain as *I* was, before! He is a wealthy young lawyer with literary ambition and a wife and child. I am hoping soon to be able to leave the *Home Journal* in his hands, and get back to Idlewild to take my place "on the shelf."

Give my best remembrances to dear Mrs. Kennedy, and believe me, my dear friend,

Ever faithfully yours, N. P. WILLIS.

HON. JOHN P. KENNEDY.

V

Kennedy came but little into contact with the writers of New England during the first half of his career; but in 1841, on a visit to Philadelphia, he met Longfellow and Sumner; and in 1847, on a trip to Boston, he met Lowell and Holmes. Two years later he made a second trip to Boston and renewed his acquaintance with the Cambridge coterie. Of his first day in the city on this occasion (November 13, 1849) he writes as follows in his diary: "Dine at the Tremont, and in the evening to a brilliant party at Nathan Appleton's, where I find all the beauty of Boston. Prescott is there, and Longfellow and his wife, a most charming woman. . . . A splendid supper, to which I conduct Mrs. Longfellow." On the following morning he called at Longfellow's home; and on the second evening thereafter he was a guest at "a magnificent dinner" at Lowell's.

In 1863 Harvard conferred upon Kennedy the degree of LL.D. In 1870 Kennedy had the opportunity of repaying some of the courtesies shown him at Cambridge: Lowell visited

Baltimore in the spring of this year to deliver a series of lectures before the Peabody Institute, and was the guest of Kennedy during his stay in the city.

There are no letters from Longfellow in the Kennedy collection, but there are half a dozen from Holmes and Lowell.

Holmes to Kennedy

BOSTON, May 11, 1859.

MY DEAR SIR:—I had to confess to your friend, Mr. Smith, that I am so liable to suffer from an absurd infirmity (attacks of asthma) when I travel of late, that I must give up the pleasure he offers me.

Nothing but this keeps me from accepting his invitation with delight. The company and the excursion promise everything one could ask to make the days pass pleasantly, and I hate to think that I must lose so delightful an opportunity. But I have been caught so often within a year or two that I am afraid to trust myself a moment out of my own hands. I had to break off a visit at New Port last summer so as to come here and get some health.

I don't want to proclaim myself an invalid, for I can sit seven hours at table and row a boat all day,—but I am at present almost tied to the sidewalks of my own town, where I never suffer from the trouble mentioned.

Thanking you for the kind interest you have taken in my joining the party, I am
Yours very truly, O. W. HOLMES.

HON. JOHN P. KENNEDY.

21 CHARLES ST., Sept. 25 [1863].

DEAR MR. KENNEDY,—I called this morning at Mr. Winthrop's, but was not fortunate enough to see you.

Perhaps you will like to dine with the Saturday Club tomorrow. The members are Agassiz, Emerson, Longfellow, Lowell, Dana, and others whose names you have heard. I saw Agassiz today, and he hoped to be with us; at any rate we shall have some of our worthies, I doubt not.

We dine between two and three, and if you would like to go, I shall be happy to call for you at $\frac{1}{4}$ past 2 and take you with me to Packer's, where we meet on the last Saturday in every month. Very truly yours,

O. W. HOLMES.

P. S.—We sometimes have the company of a politician or two—Mr. Sumner and others, who add a little variety to our literary club. You will be welcome either as man of letters or statesman.

BOSTON, Feb. 10, 1864.

MY DEAR MR. KENNEDY,—I will with great pleasure make a fair copy of what I consider the best poem I have written and send it to you in good season,—to Col. Bliss, I mean.¹²

¹² This letter was written in response to a request from Kennedy for an article to be included in a volume of *Autograph Leaves of American Authors*, edited by Kennedy in collaboration with Col. Alexander Bliss, and published for the benefit of the wounded soldiers of the North. Holmes is represented in this volume by his poem *The Flower of Liberty*.

I shall send your letter and circular out to James Lowell tomorrow and ask him to pass it on to Whittier and so back to me. I have no doubt that each of these gentlemen will be happy to make the slight contribution you ask for, and I am sure that for my own part I consider myself fortunate in being able to help in any way to carry out your noble and patriotic plans. It rejoiced my inmost soul when I found that you were one of the faithful among the many faithless with whom it was your misfortune to be surrounded. We who have stood outside the door of the fiery furnace can hardly tell what you [who] have been tried in it have gone through. But the time will come for us or for our children in which these sacrifices, greater or less, that we have all had to make, will be remembered as are the glorious trials of our first revolution. If we are faithful to the end, I believe there is preparing for us such a reward of national grandeur and peaceful development as the world has never seen. Such is evidently the fear of England, but the hopes of mankind and the plans of Providence cannot be defeated to please the Times and the land-graspers and man-haters who pay its mercenaries.

Believe me, my dear Mr. Kennedy, Yours very sincerely,
 _____ OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

Lowell to Kennedy

CAMBRIDGE, 26 April, 1860.

MY DEAR SIR,—By the same mail with this letter, I send you the proofsheets of your "Legend of Maryland." They have been longer about it at the printing-office than I expected, or I should have written to you before.

I have found it particularly interesting, and shall be truly gratified to see it in the "Atlantic." Forgive me for making you the victim of a confidence, but (apart from all other considerations of intrinsic merit) it is so seldom that the editor of an American Magazine has the luck to meet with a contributor who writes altogether like a gentleman, that such an event gives him a particular pleasure. There is so much cleverness and so little *style*!

Will you be kind enough to return the proofsheets to me at your earliest convenience, that I may print the article in the July number? Can it be divided? If you think so, will you mark where you think it can best be done? It will, as it is, make twenty-six pages.

I am very truly yours (and with many thanks), J. R. LOWELL.

_____ ELMWOOD, 25th Feby, 1864.

MY DEAR SIR,—It gives me great pleasure to serve you in any way, but especially in this, for we deeply value and honour the patriotism of the Loyalists of Maryland and feel how much more their trial has been than our own.

I should have chosen something else, but Mr. Bliss wrote asking me to copy the little pastoral I send.¹³ So I obey orders. I have tried to freshen it with a few new verses that I might more fully show my interest in your Fair. I have spoiled it perhaps. With great regard, Truly yours,

J. R. LOWELL.

HON. J. P. KENNEDY.

¹³ The reference is to a lately revised version of "The Courtin'." The text is, aside from a few variations in the pointing, the same as that ultimately adopted by the poet.

ELMWOOD, 7th May, 1870.

MY DEAR MR. KENNEDY,—Nothing could have been pleasanter than your letter, for it had the true epistolary charm of bringing me into the company of the writer. It brought me back into your pleasant library, and renewed for me the hospitality which saved me from feeling myself a stranger and mere itinerant in Baltimore. If you knew how I hate these preaching-tours, you would understand how cordially I remember your friendly courtesies.

It was a great pleasure to us both to get the photograph. I think it very good, with more of your natural air than any of those you showed me. It is very agreeable to have you sitting in my library—though I think you have the look of being a little surprised (within proper limits of goodbreeding) by its *clutter*, after the orderly decorum of your own. However, even your shadow is heartily welcome, and I hope it will prove but a prelude of yourself. I send you one of mine—the best I have at present, though I hope to replace it with a better before long. Your snow-white beards have a great advantage in photography over us whom Time has only frost-bitten and grizzled. We who are so tenacious of our youthful age, never get our full credit of wisdom. As the Senior class makes us dons sit every year to be caricatured, I am getting impatient to be white-washed—it is so effective.

I am glad you found something to like in my book. It encourages me to ask your acceptance of a copy. I should have sent it already, but that I always conceive a disgust of what I write, the moment it is published. The old *litera scripta manet* was bad enough, but stereotyping has given a more malign significance to the *litera impressa*. One can't improve if he would. I will send you a little package by express—*paid*. I mention this because I have a grave suspicion that our carriers "skim their milk on both sides," as our country-folk say of stingy people.

Many thanks for your invitation to come and discourse again. It seems to cast a dash of sunshine on the trade of lecturing, and I am strongly tempted to come—mainly that it will enable me to renew my intercourse with yourself. Mr. Morison has written asking for eight lectures. Perhaps I shall compromise on six. You see that the harmless-looking cord that you pulled, had a showerbath at the other end. Nevertheless, I pray you to understand that I am highly gratified at being asked to come again, for I have great diffidence of my lecturing powers, my natural impulse not working in that direction.

I have not forgotten my purpose of writing an article for the *North American* on Reconstruction, taking your "letters" as a text. Hitherto I have not found the leisure, for unhappily I cannot find my opinions ready-made in my inkstand, as most of our political teachers seem to do. It used to take thought even to boil an egg, but nowadays everybody is ready to cook you up a new system of the universe at a moment's notice. For my own part, I think wisdom a plant of even slower growth than confidence. If we lose something, I fancy we gain more by ceasing to be sure we are right at the first go-off.

I shall enclose in my package a little volume which I hope Mrs. Kennedy will accept as a souvenir. I hate illustrated books, and the prints in this are simply hideous, but it is the prettiest copy I have of the only one of my poems that ever had the luck to be in any sense popular. So as I believe in popularity (and tremble), I suppose it must have some merit of being *interesting* which the others lack.

Mrs. Lowell joins me in cordial remembrance to Mrs. Kennedy and Miss Gray, as well as to yourself, and I beg you, my dear Sir, always to think of me as

Most sincerely your friend and servant, J. R. LOWELL.

JOHN P. KENNEDY, Esquire.

Kennedy to Lowell

90 MADISON ST., BALTIMORE, May 15, 1870.

MY DEAR LOWELL,—Although I *had* your books, the parcel you sent me the other day, coming with that kind message of remembrance from you, was most especially welcomed by the whole parlor family of No. 90. And it forthwith brought fresh readings of choice bits from "Under the Willows" and new commendations of that noble 'Commemoration Ode'.

Your letter, which came a few days before, brought me that excellent photograph which shall, with all convenient speed, take its place upon my library wall in harmonious association with Thackeray, Prescott, and Irving. You talk of another—but I don't think you will be likely to get a *better* likeness. If you do, I should like to see it.

We are all—I speak primarily of The Peabody, and, more diffusively, of the good-lecture-loving public of our City—we are all joyful in the hope of having you here again next winter—with broader privilege and freer scope. We mean you shall make each lecture as long as you choose, and give us as many as you think will do justice to your subject. For, touching these Lowell Lectures, there is a manifest forgetfulness of the *time* and great regard for the *number*. So, if you wish to secure for yourself a good epitaph, when you come to that stage of your wants, don't fail to come to us next winter to clinch the nail you have already driven into the heart of this society. . . . Mr. Morison, our Provost, will make all the arrangements necessary to your convenience—and the rest of us—I, in particular, *Deo Volente*,—will give ourselves to the pleasant duty of making Baltimore an attraction to you and Mrs. Lowell, which we hope will bring you often back.

Mrs. Kennedy charges me to assure you of her kind reciprocation with which she acknowledges that friendly souvenir which you have sent her in the beautiful "Vision of Sir Launfal"—and she hopes for the opportunity in her own house of expressing her estimation both of the poem and the author in the pleasant hours of his visit to Baltimore.

I have been rather under the weather for a month past with an attack of old age, which my Doctor is quite unable to cure.¹⁴ It shows itself inwardly in "marvellous weak hams" and outwardly in the difficulty of writing legible letters, which is only accomplished by slow and painful attention to the tremor of the hand, and contriving to scratch each word between the shakes.

This letter will show you that I have not always been successful in this attempt.

The ladies unite with me in kind remembrance to Mrs. L. and yourself—
and I am, my dear Lowell,

Always your friend,

JOHN P. KENNEDY.

J. RUSSELL LOWELL, Esq.

In the next and final installment of these papers will be given a number of letters by Southern writers; some touching on literary matters, others relating to slavery and the Civil War.

KILLIS CAMPBELL.

University of Texas.

¹⁴ Kennedy died three months later, August 18, 1870.